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NRO Review Completed.

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This document contains information referring to Projects:

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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

June 16, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. VANCE

SUBJECT: OXCART PROGRAM

The CIA has proposed two options for modifying the OXCART phase-out plan in view of the BLACK SHIELD deployment to Kadena. An additional factor is the delay in achievement of an operational ECM capability in the SR-71. According to the original OXCART phase-out plan three of nine total aircraft: (a/c #134, the former TAGBOARD launch aircraft is already in) were to be phased-out of the operational program on July 1, 1967. Simultaneously, as specified in your May 9 memorandum, the SR-71 unit was to have been assigned responsibility for Cuban contingency operations previously covered by the CIA SKYLARK operation. At present, the schedule for an operational ECM capability in the SR-71 is estimated for October 1967. The SR-71 without ECM would not offer a sufficient increase in probability of survival over a U-2 with ECM against the Cuban defense environment to justify the substitution of the SR-71 for the U-2..

The first CIA option would be to defer phase-out of the three operational aircraft on July 1, 1967, one of which is currently assigned to flight test, until December 31, 1967. Also, the two additional aircraft (one a test airplane and a trainer) which in the original plan were to have been phased-out NRO by October 1, 1967 would be kept until December 31, 1967. The cost of the OXCART program for FY 1968 under the original phaseout plan with minor modifications would have been The cost of this option, including the costs of the three aircraft deployment to Kadena, would be added to the , for a total of This option would provide attrition aircraft against possible losses (either: combat or noncombat) in Southeast Asia and would provide a capability against a Cuban contingency.

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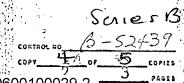
The second GIA option would continue the entire OKCART + 1,11,
fleet throughout Fiscal Year 1968, and actually on a basis . Wh
for procurement of lead-time support, spares, etc. which
would protect the option for continuation of the program
indefinitely. However, aircraft and engine improvement pro-
grams would be limited to safety of flight items only and no Mills
new equipment (such as ECM) acquisition would be undertaken : All
during Fiscal Year 1968. The cost of this option would be
over the \$ of option one for a total 2
cost of . In addition to this direct cost under
the OXCART budget line, we estimate a further cost of about
for fuel and photographic materials and processing
for this option. Also, in the expectation of program continua-
tion beyond Fiscal Year 1968, further development of equipment
(especially ECM) would normally be contemplated.

At the present time we are maintaining a position which would enable us to pursue option one. (Deferral of phase-out of all OXCART aircraft until December 31, 1961). However, a decision must be made very soon if we are to proceed with the best approximation to the original phase-out plan consistent with the Kadena deployment. The status of aircraft after July 1, 1967 under the present versions of the three plans would be as follows:

٠.	Current I	nventory	Z in the contract of	Phase-out	Plan 3	Option O	ne ·	
٠.				i '				•]:
: . :	3 operati	onal a/c	at Kadena	Retain to	12/31/67	Retain t	0 12/31/	67 ·
. • . 3	3 operati	onal at		🖔 Phase-out	two	Retain t	o 12/31/	67
				7/1/67))		25 X ′
			名基金,如果	Retain on	e to			20,
;-	3			💮 12/31/6 7				NRO.
	2 test a/	c (the part)		Phase-out	one	Convert	one test	· ·
				7/1/67		to oper	ational	•
٠.,	•			Phase-out	one	Retain t	o 12/31/	67
			• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	10/1/67		,	•	,
٠.	l trainer	(J-75 €	engines)	Phase-out	10/1/67	Retain t	o -12/31/	6 7 ;.
•							• •	

Under option two all aircraft would be retained indefinitely.

It can be seen that under the phase-out plan, after July 1, 1967, the three aircraft at Kadena would be backed up with only one operationally configured aircraft and clearly this is insufficient to insure availability of three aircraft at Kadena over a six month period. The Cuban contingency will be essentially



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not covered by either OXCART or SR-71 aircraft for most of this period. It therefore would seem to be prudent to adopt option one with a decision point in October to begin earlier phase-out of some OXCART aircraft when the SR-71 operational capability is verified. This would not greatly reduce the cost increment directly associated with option one but will allow a longer period for orderly phase-out actions.

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